

Major Idea

One of the purposes of government, according to the Preamble to the Constitution, is to “secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.” By analyzing the Preamble, correlating the grievances listed in the Declaration of Independence with rights guaranteed in the Constitution, and evaluating arguments for and against the Constitution at the time of ratification, students will gain a clearer understanding of the rights enjoyed by American citizens. “Using Historical Documents” provides the student opportunities to examine main ideas from several important documents, including concepts that lay the foundation for the American system of government.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

1. recognize the importance of the Preamble to the Constitution
2. identify the purposes of government, as outlined in the Preamble to the Constitution
3. identify constitutional provisions that empower the government to fulfill its purposes as outlined in the Preamble
4. compare the offenses by King George III listed in the Declaration of Independence with the solutions written in the Constitution
5. analyze the major arguments of Federalists and Anti-Federalists

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills

6.2A, B; 6.12C; 6.14A, B; 6.21B, C, D; 6.22A, B, C, D, E; 8.16A, B, C; 8.17A; 8.18A; 8.22A, B, C; 8.30B, C, D, E, H; 8.31A, B, C, D.

Materials Needed

Attachment 1: Preamble to the Constitution
Attachment 2: The Federal Edifice
Attachment 3: Learning Stations
Markers
Butcher paper
Scissors
Glue
Magazines

Vocabulary

constitution
domestic
federalist, anti-federalist
ordain
preamble

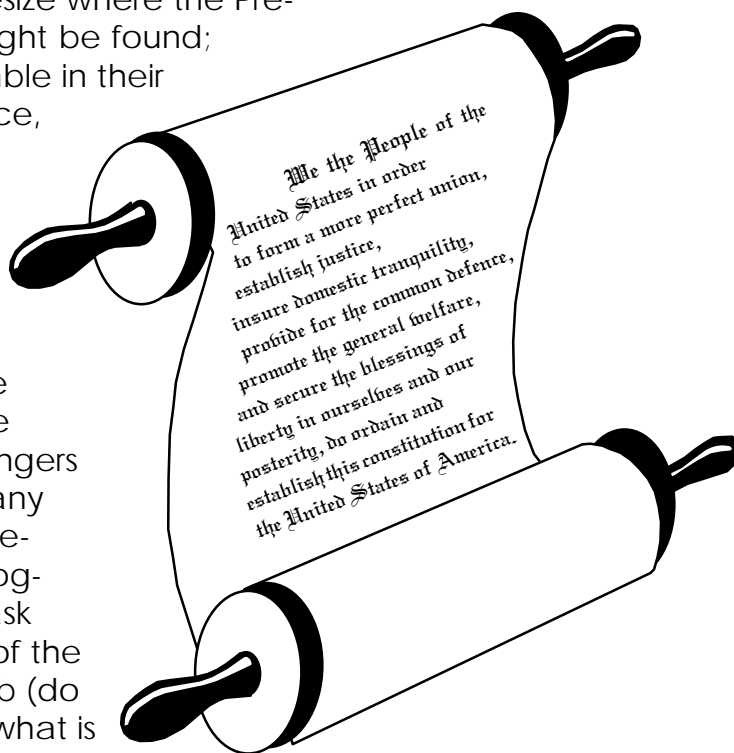
U.S. Constitution
grievance
justice
posterity
tranquillity

Teaching Strategies

- Using a transparency of **Attachment 1**, lead students in a discussion that will enable them to discover the meaning of the word preamble: *pre* = before; *amble* = to walk; therefore *preamble* means to go before or to precede.

Then ask students to hypothesize where the Preamble to the Constitution might be found; have them locate the Preamble in their textbooks. Read it aloud twice, once with them following along silently and the second time with them joining you.

Continue the discussion by asking students to look at the Preamble carefully and to use the appropriate number of fingers to show non-verbally how many sentences are found in the Preamble. When they have recognized that there is only one, ask them to identify the subject of the sentence (We...) and the verb (do ordain and establish), to tell what is being established (this Constitution ...), and finally, to analyze the remainder of the Preamble (a prepositional phrase that tells why the Constitution was written).



The remainder of the discussion should focus on those six purposes: form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity. Taking each one individually, ask students what it means and offer some examples of how the Founding Fathers tried to meet that purpose in the Constitution (use vocabulary activities

that are appropriate for your students as you conduct this discussion). If available, show the filmstrip "Preamble" from the *America Rocks* series by Xerox Corporation. Working as a class, have students paraphrase each of the six purposes.

2. Divide students into six groups. Assign each group one of the six purposes of government as listed in the Preamble. Using a copy of the Constitution, each group is to locate specific provisions in the Constitution which grant the government power to fulfill that particular purpose. Have each group write their findings with markers on butcher paper that can be displayed around the room. Also ask each group to select a spokesperson to explain the list to the class. An optional activity is to have students bring to class and discuss newspaper articles that reflect the passages located in the Constitution.
3. Have students make collages to illustrate the six purposes for writing the Constitution, as stated in the Preamble (**Handbook of Strategies, Strategy No. 14**). This can be done in several different ways; choose the one that best fits your situation.
 - a. Have students work alone or in pairs to illustrate all six purposes on one collage.
 - b. Divide the class into six groups and have each group create a collage that illustrates one of the six purposes.
 - c. Have students bring in appropriate pictures and place them on a bulletin board that will serve as a class collage to illustrate the six purposes.

Have each student/group explain their visual representations to the rest of the class; then display the collages in a prominent place in the classroom.

4. Working individually or in pairs, have students create new preambles. They may be written for any institution the student chooses (for example: U.S. government, school, family, or church) and should reflect ideals important to the student.
5. Have students write or recite the Preamble from memory and tell what it means.
6. Divide the class into small groups. Provide each with a copy of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. Read the charges against King George III, assign each group four or five grievances and ask them to search the Constitution for specific provisions relating to these grievances. Have each group select a reporter to share their findings with the class.

Examples

King's Offense

1. "...quartering large bodies
of troops among us..."

2. "...cutting off our trade..."

Constitution

1. Amendment 3

2. Article I, Section 8, Clause 3

7. After students have read their textbook's presentation of the arguments for and against ratification of the Constitution, ask them to analyze the cartoon, *The Federal Edifice*, in order to determine the artist's point of view (**Attachment 2**). The following questions might be helpful:

(Be Sure to point out that the colonial "s" looks very much like our "f", so that students read the word *rise* correctly.)

What does "federal" mean?

What is an "edifice"?

What does the artist refer to with his title *The Federal Edifice*?

What is the "foundation" mentioned in the cartoon?

How many pillars are there?

What do they represent?

How do you know?

How many pillars are standing? Why?

Are the remaining pillars rising or falling? How do you know?

Does the cartoon represent a Federalist or Anti-Federalist position?

How do you know?

8. Use the learning stations strategy (**Handbook of Strategies, Strategy No. 27**) and **Attachment 3** to further develop students' understanding of the positions of Federalists and Anti-Federalists.

Answer Key

Federalist Arguments

I, II, III, V, X

Anti-Federalist Arguments

IV, VI, VII, VIII, IX

9. Ask students to design their own political cartoons in which they reflect either a Federalist or Anti-Federalist point of view. Display the cartoons around the room and have students analyze them from their point of view.

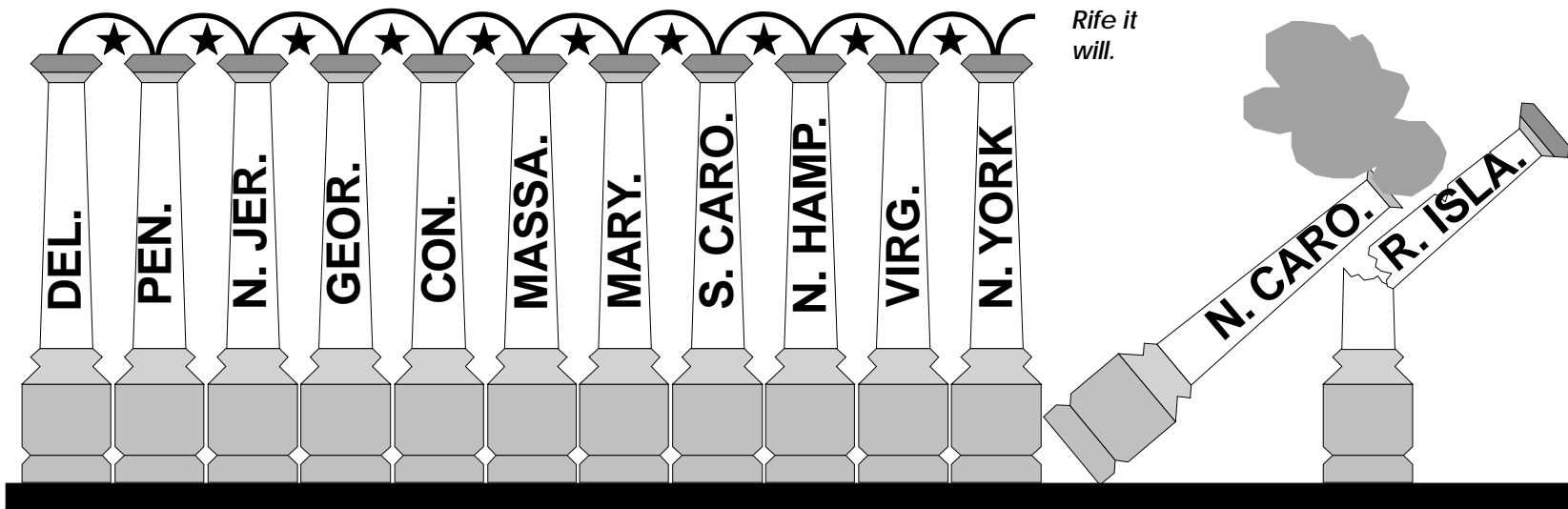
Evaluation

Observe and evaluate students' participation in class and group activities.
Collect and evaluate the collages.
Collect and evaluate students' original preambles.
Evaluate students' performances on the Preamble memory work.
Evaluate students' original cartoons.


Preamble

We The People of the United States,
in order to form a more perfect union,
establish justice, insure domestic tranquility,
provide for the common defence,
promote the general welfare,
and secure the blessings of liberty
to ourselves and our posterity,
do ordain and establish this
Constitution for the
United States of America.

What do the pillars shown in this cartoon of 1786 represent?
What pillars were not yet raised?



The FEDERAL EDIFICE.

 The foundation
good-it may yet
be SAVED

Attachment 3*Learning Stations*

STATION I

. . . A federal government . . . ought to be clothed with all the powers requisite to complete execution of its trust.

STATION II

Energy in the Executive is a leading characteristic in the definition of good government.

STATION III

This country should never be split into a number of unsocial, jealous, and alien sovereignties.

STATION IV

The states should respectively have laws, courts, force, and revenues of their own sufficient for their own security; they ought to be fit to keep house alone if necessary.

STATION V

I am against inserting a declaration of rights in the Constitution . . . If such an addition is not dangerous, it is at least unnecessary.

STATION VI

A bill of rights . . . serves to secure the minority against the usurpation and tyranny of the majority.

STATION VII

The . . . new form of government . . . declares a consolidation or union of all the thirteen parts, or states, into one great whole . . . It is an intuitive truth that a consolidated republican form of government [will lead] . . . into a monarchy, either limited or despotic.

STATION VIII

. . . one government . . . never can extend equal benefits to all parts of the United States. Different laws, customs, and opinions exist in the different states, which by a uniform system of laws would be unreasonably invaded.

STATION IX

The number of representatives [called for in the Constitution of 1787] appears to be too few, either to communicate the requisite information of the wants, local circumstances, and sentiments of so extensive an empire, or to prevent corruption and undue influence in the exigencies of such great powers.

STATION X

. . . under the Confederation . . . the measures of the Union have not been executed; and the delinquencies of the States have step by step matured themselves to an extreme, which has, at length, arrested all the wheels of the national government and brought them to an awful stand.

Rights, Liberties, and Obligations of Citizenship

Major Idea

Citizens of a democracy are aware of the nation's commitment to individual freedoms, freedoms that are best exemplified by the Bill of Rights. Americans concerned with maintaining a high level of freedom are also aware of their responsibilities as citizens.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

1. recognize that American citizens not only enjoy many rights guaranteed by the Constitution, but also have many responsibilities associated with those rights
2. consider the importance of individual liberties found in the Bill of Rights
3. analyze voting trends of young voters
4. analyze strategies for increasing voter turnout

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills

6.2A, B; 6.13A; 6.14A, B; 8.16C; 8.20B, C, D, F; 8.22B; 8.26C; 8.30B, C, E, H; 8.31A, B, C, D; 8.32A, B.

Materials Needed

Attachment 4: Continuum, with Signs
 Attachment 5: A Visitor from Outer Space
 Attachment 6: Voting Patterns of Different Age Groups
 Attachment 7: Improving Voter Participation
 Attachment 8: Sample Election Bills for Class Discussion
 Attachment 9: One Vote Counts
 Materials and posters for cartoons
 Blank audio and video tapes
 Video camera
 Tape recorder

Vocabulary

bill
 responsibility
 self-incrimination

counsel
 right

Teaching Strategies

1. Use the following quotations to develop a class discussion on the concept that responsibilities accompany rights. You might ask students what they think these quotations mean and why each person quoted might have made the statement. After asking students to generate some examples to illustrate each of the quotations, let them discuss whether or not they agree with the concept embodied in each of the statements.

Those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom must undergo the fatigue of supporting it.

Thomas Paine

Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country.

President John F. Kennedy

There can be no daily democracy without daily citizenship.

Ralph Nader

Use any two of the quotations to develop an understanding of the idea that responsibilities accompany rights and then use the remaining quotation for the continuum activity (**Handbook of Strategies, Strategy No. 1**) with the two polar positions being "Strongly Agree" and "Strongly Disagree." An alternative strategy is to follow the range of position activity (**Handbook of Strategies, Strategy No. 9**). If there is much disagreement among students on a given topic, it is helpful to alternate speakers from either end of the continuum and to ask each student to summarize or paraphrase what the previous speaker has said before stating an opinion (**Attachment 4**).

2. Distribute "A Visitor From Outer Space" (**Attachment 5**). Read the instructions and ask students to list the rights in order from most important to least important (**Handbook of Strategies, Strategy No. 8**). This may be done individually or in small groups. Survey the class to determine how they ranked these freedoms and which five they judged to be most important. Discuss. Ask them if there are any other rights that are so important that they should be included in the top five and, if so, what they are and what they would omit to make room for the new ones. Referring to the quotations from above, ask what responsibilities citizens might have in relation to each of the freedoms (what "support" might Paine think necessary?).
3. To develop the concept that voting is a responsibility as well as a right, show students the transparency made from "Who Does Vote" (**Attachment 6**).

Discuss the following questions:

Which age group votes the most? Which age group votes the least?

What pattern can you find about voting trends among all three groups between 1976 and 1988?

In what age group and in what years did a majority of citizens vote?

What pattern can you find about voting trends as people get older? What do you think this means for elections and for people campaigning for office?

4. Have students participate in a continuum activity by standing along an imaginary or real (use masking tape) line in the room to illustrate the strength of their reaction to this statement: "Are Voting Rights Wasted on Teenagers?" Hang signs at either end of the continuum: "Strongly Agree" and "Strongly Disagree." Ask students to explain their reasons for placing themselves at particular points along the line (**Attachment 4**).
5. Have students brainstorm reasons people don't vote. Distribute "Improving Voter Participation," (from Excel in Civics) (**Attachment No. 7**). After discussing the reading, divide the class into groups of three or four. Assign each group one of the proposals from "Sample Election Bills for Class Discussion" (**Attachment 8**). Each group should study the assigned proposal (bill) and answer the following questions:
 - a. Would this bill be likely to increase voter registration and voting? Why or why not?
 - b. Which, if any, of the Presidential Commission recommendations does the bill adopt?
 - c. What are any negative features of the bill?
 - d. What are any positive features of the bill?
 - e. If you were voting on this bill, how would you vote and why? If you wouldn't vote for it, can you suggest any changes to make the bill more attractive?

Conclude this part of the activity by asking each group to report on its bill to the rest of the class. Let the class vote on each bill that is recommended by a group (adapted from Excel in Civics).

6. Working alone or in pairs, have students create a poster, rap song, video, audio spot, or editorial cartoon in which they encourage young people to vote. If they have previously studied propaganda techniques, you might encourage them to apply any of those techniques to this activity*.

* This activity was taken from "Your Vote," Robert A. Taft Institute of Government, 420 Lexington Avenue, New York.

Evaluation

Observe and evaluate students' participation in class and group activities.
Collect and evaluate students' original posters, rap songs, videos, audio spots, and editorial cartoons.

Are Voting Rights Wasted on Teenagers?



**Strongly
Disagree**



**Strongly
Agree**



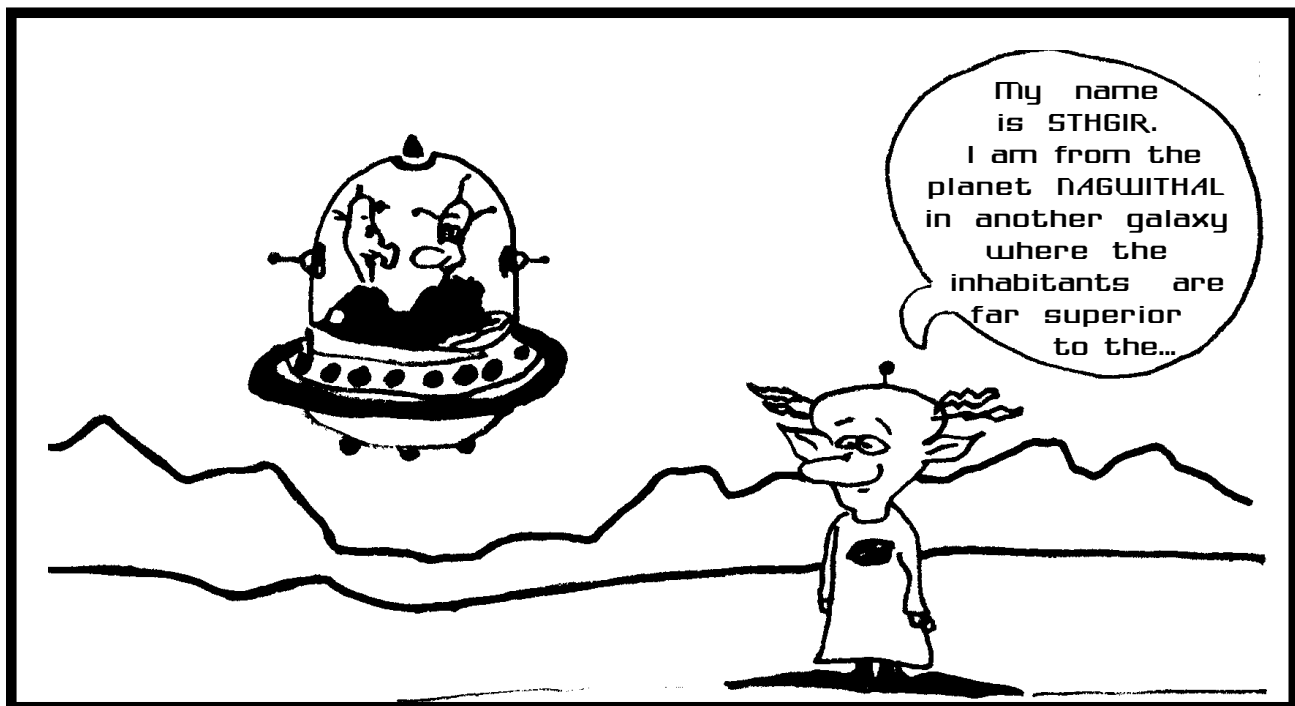
Strongly Agree



Strongly Disagree

A VISITOR FROM OUTER SPACE

It is 2010. You are living a quiet, prosperous life in Texas. You are quietly watching television with your family when a news bulletin comes over the TV station. You immediately see that this is not the normal type of news bulletin because there is what looks like a very strange creature on the screen--the only thing familiar is that he is speaking English. He tells you that he and his people have gained control over all of the communications networks in the United States and that everyone had better pay attention to what he has to say. You change the channel--and just as he said--there he is on every station. He begins to speak very loudly. You gather your family around you because you are beginning to worry about what he is going to do. His speech is as follows:



My name is STHGIR. I am from the planet NAGWITIAL in another galaxy where the inhabitants are far superior to the beings on this planet EARTH. Just as we have gained control over the communications of the United States, we have the ability to take complete control over every one of your lives. We do not want a war between our planet and yours, but we do want to control some things so that we can live in peace and harmony with you. We have looked at some of your laws and the way your government operates and have found that they give too much freedom to the individual. Therefore, we are going to conduct a survey to try and arrive at a decision about which both you and I will be happy. As I have said, I do not want to take everything away from you, but I can't allow you to live as you have in the past. Therefore, I am giving you a list of ten of the rights that you now have according to your Constitution. You are to look over the list and decide which of the ten are most important to you. I will allow you to keep FIVE of the ten rights, the five which get the most votes from all the citizens of the United States.

Rights and Freedoms

You are to rank the following rights in the order in which you would give them up, with **1** being the right you would give up last and **10** being the one you would give up first. After you have completed your ranking, you will receive further instructions.

Directions: Rank from 1 to 10 your most important rights (1-most important, 10-least important).

- _____ Right to bear arms
- _____ Right to freedom of speech
- _____ Right to legal counsel
- _____ Right to protection from cruel and unusual punishment
- _____ Right to freedom of the press
- _____ Right to jury trial
- _____ Right to freedom of religion
- _____ Right to peacefully assemble
- _____ Protection from self-incrimination
- _____ Right to protection from unreasonable searches and seizures

Suggestion: This exercise can be used for lower grade levels as well. Teachers may want to list rights on index cards and have students rank them accordingly.

Who Does Vote?

	Voting Patterns of Different Age Groups (percent reporting they voted)		
	★	★	★
	18-20	21-24	25-34
1976	38.0	45.6	55.4
1980	35.7	43.1	54.6
1984	36.7	43.5	54.5
1988	33.2	38.3	48.0

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 440 and earlier reports.

Attachment 7*Improving Voter Participation*

Your vote can make a difference (see "One Vote Counts," **Attachment 8**). A number of critical elections would have turned out differently if just one more person in each precinct had voted the other way. For example, it is claimed that if only one more voter per precinct had voted for Richard Nixon in 1960, Nixon would have been elected president at that time. And in 1968, if only one more voter per precinct had voted for Hubert Humphrey, Humphrey would have been elected president. United States senators have been elected by fewer than fifty votes in some states. In 1982, thirteen congressional elections were decided by fewer than fifteen hundred votes. In 1982, some candidates actually received more votes at the polls than their opponents, but they lost the elections because their opponents received more **early votes**.

Your vote *can* make a difference. Your vote can help decide who is elected and therefore help determine government policy. Your vote can mean more aid for education or more money for the military. Yet, many people still refuse to vote.

One reason people do not vote is that they have to register first. In 1963, the Presidential Commission on Registration and Voting concluded that the major reason for non-voting was restrictive voter registration laws. The commission made the following recommendations to improve voter participation:

- Each state should set up a commission on registration and voting participation, or . . . survey in detail its election law and practices.
- Local residency requirements should not exceed 30 days.
- New state residents should be allowed to vote for President.
- Voter registration should extend as close to election day as possible, and should not end more than 3 or 4 weeks before election day.
- **Literacy tests** should be abolished.
- Voting by 18-year-olds should be considered by the states.
- The right to vote should be extended to those living on federal reservations (that is, native Americans, living on reservations).
- The **poll tax** as a qualification for voting should be eliminated.

As a result of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, federal court decisions, the Twenty-Fourth and Twenty-Sixth Amendments, and various state laws, all of these recommendations have been implemented. Yet, voter participation has continued to decline.

The Committee for the Study of the American Electorate has recently analyzed nonvoting in the United States. The committee is a bipartisan group of civic, educational, labor, business, and political leaders.

Their analysis indicates that many eligible voters do not register and vote for the following reasons:

- They are not interested in voting;
- They do not believe their vote makes a difference;
- They believe there is very little difference in the candidates and therefore the results will not make much difference in the direction of government.

These same studies confirm that more people vote when they believe their vote will make a difference.

For example, in the 1983 election for mayor of Chicago, nearly 89 percent of the registered voters voted. Many people say such a high turnout occurred because of a clear difference in the candidates' views on major issues and a belief among voters that the election was important and would be close. Harold Washington, the Democratic candidate, ran on a platform promising major changes and reform of city government. Bernard Epton, the Republican candidate, promised not to make major changes and urged voters to elect him "before it's too late." On April 12, 1983, a record number of voters ventured to the polls--1,291,858. Washington received 668,176 votes, or 51.7 percent of the votes cast. It was estimated that more than 100,000 of the votes were cast by newly registered voters. As one political observer noted, "The Washington campaign created a sense of excitement and optimism about the possibilities of power in people who had given up on the political system." Clearly, those voters thought their vote would make a difference.

Attachment 8***Sample Election Bills for Class Discussion***

- Bill #1 A law permitting same-day registration for voting. All persons wishing to vote may register and vote on election day by demonstrating proof of age and residency and by swearing that they are citizens of the United States. Upon meeting these requirements, persons will be permitted to vote in the election.
- Bill #2 A law making all state and federal elections official holidays. Any eligible voter failing to vote will be subject to a fine.
- Bill #3 A law establishing weekends, Saturday and Sunday, as official election days. All elections would be held over a two-day weekend and the polls would be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on both Saturday and Sunday.
- Bill #4 A law to extend the hours that polls will be open. The polls would open at 5 a.m. and close at midnight, permitting eligible voters to vote at anytime during those hours.
- Bill #5 A law authorizing an election commission to hire and deputize election commissioners to go door-to-door to verify the accuracy of the voter registration lists by checking each address with the name(s) on the registration list. The commissioners would be authorized to register all unregistered voters right at their door. Registration postcards would be distributed where no one answers. Eligible but unregistered voters will have an opportunity to complete the registration cards and mail them to the election commission. The returned postcards will serve as the voter's registration.
- Bill #6 A law requiring the following words to appear below the list of candidates for an office: "None of the Above is Acceptable." Any eligible voter may vote against all candidates for the same office by placing an "X" or punching the appropriate square before the words "None of the Above." If "None of the Above" receives a plurality of the votes cast, a new election will be scheduled and additional candidates will have an opportunity to file and campaign for this office.

This activity was taken from Jenkins, Stephen, et al. Excel in Civics--Lessons in Citizenship, St. Paul, West Publishing Company, 1985.

One Vote Counts

Listed below are several instances from history when one vote made a difference in the outcome of an election or a governmental decision.

- In 1645 one vote gave Oliver Cromwell control of England.
- In 1649 one vote caused Charles I of England to be executed.
- In 1776 one vote gave America the English language instead of German.
- In 1793 one vote cost King Louis XVI his life due to the French National Assembly's decision by a one vote margin to execute.
- In 1800 one vote elected Thomas Jefferson president.
- In 1824 the U.S. House of Representatives elected John Quincy Adams president over Andrew Jackson when one representative from New York changed his vote.
- In 1839 one vote elected Marcus Morton Governor of Massachusetts.
- In 1845 one vote brought Texas into the Union.
- In 1868 one vote saved President Andrew Johnson from impeachment.
- In 1875 one vote changed France from a monarchy to a Republic.
- In 1876 one vote changed France from a monarchy to a Republic.
- In 1911 an average of only one vote per precinct passed women's suffrage in California.
- In 1912 less than one vote per precinct, in one state, elected Woodrow Wilson President.
- In 1920 one vote made Tennessee the 36th state to ratify the 19th amendment, which gave women the right to vote.
- In 1923 one vote gave Adolph Hitler leadership of the Nazi Party.
- In 1948, if Thomas Dewey had received one more vote in each precinct in Ohio and California, his race with Harry Truman would have been thrown into the House of Representatives.
- In 1968 a change of one vote per precinct in three states would have made Hubert Humphrey president instead of Richard Nixon.

Source: National Ad Council and National Association of Secretaries, "One Vote Makes a Difference," November 1976, *Austin American-Statesman*.

Organizing Voter-Turnout Campaigns

Major Idea

Conduct a voter turnout campaign to encourage voter education/voter education.

Learning Objectives

A successful voter-turnout campaign will help students and (in some cases) community members to:

1. increase awareness of voter-registration deadlines
2. explore the link between voting and changes in government/policies
3. examine the foundations of the American political system
4. promote cooperation between schools and the community
5. develop interpersonal skills
6. develop creative thinking skills and the ability to be part of a team
7. increase voter turnout on election day
8. develop problem solving skills

Reprinted with permission of the National Student/Parent Mock Election (NSPME) by C.J. Archer, Retired Elementary School Educator, Ventura County, California

Materials Needed

Attachment 1: Checklist for registration supplies

Analyze voting trends and their causes

Questions such as these can serve as a springboard for discussion:

What are the responsibilities and rights of a voting citizen? How are these guaranteed and protected? (For example, what were the implications of the Voting Rights Act? What events led up to the Voting Rights Act legislation? What role did the Civil Rights Movement play in this legislation?)

When did African Americans earn the right to vote? (Constitutional Amendment XV) Women? (Constitutional Amendment XIX) How did these amendments change government/politics at the time? Did more African Americans/women enter into political office? Why or why not?

What has caused the current decline in voter turnout? What are/will be the implications of this trend?

How has voter apathy affected other countries (for example, the Weimar Republic?)

Is voter participation increasing or decreasing in your state/district/area and why? To what else might these trends be connected (economic, educational, weather)?

What efforts have been made to increase voter turnout in your state/district/area?

How successful was Oregon's vote-by-mail project and why? Could it be successfully implemented in other states?

Organize student-run drives to register voters and/or get voters to the polls. Design events such as contests, parades, transportation, and telephone chains, or publish a special neighborhood paper about the need to vote or about the candidates and issues.

Organizing Voter-Turnout Campaigns

Plan and organize a voter turnout

The following steps can help you organize a successful voter turnout campaign:

1. List your goals.
2. Inventory your resources.
3. Schedule a location and date.
4. Determine the format of your event.
5. Delegate responsibilities.
6. Involve parents and the community.
7. Publicize your event.
8. Follow up.

List your goals

With your students, decide if you want to register voters or get voters to the polls. Who is your target audience? Consider targeting one segment of the voting population such as women, ethnic groups, and seniors. Targeting under-represented populations can be a very efficient use of resources, as well as a highly effective and broadly applicable teaching tool. The U.S. Census Bureau or your state and/or local election officials can provide you with voter statistics for your district.

Inventory your resources

Spend a class period brainstorming the necessary and available resources. Do you have access to: money, office supplies, copying equipment, word processing machines, faxes and phones, video cameras, meeting rooms, tables, chairs, podiums, lecterns, refreshments, and so on? What do you need that you don't already have?

If your effort is going to include a voter registration drive, you'll need very specific resources, such as official forms. It may help to make a checklist of all the resources you'll need before you begin your effort.

Students can provide tremendous resources, both in terms of staffing and researching or coordinating tasks. Encourage parents to get involved; perhaps they have a personal contact at the local TV station who can help you get media coverage of your event, or they may have training in organizing community events. Does your community have local chapters of the Young Democrats or Young Republicans? Your most important resource is your local Board of Elections. Be sure you contact them early and work with them closely.

Schedule a location and date

When and where do you want your event to take place? Planning voter drives around other civic events can help you increase the number of people you reach. Consider choosing a central location or location near your target audience. For example, you could set up voter registration booths for women at local grocery stores or outside a meeting of local business women; at college football games or concerts for young people; and at nursing homes for seniors.

Determine the format of your event

Consider the following possible formats:

Organize a student contest to design a get-out-the-vote flyer.

To ensure adequate participation, prizes should be awarded on a first, second, and third place basis. The flyer winning first place could be duplicated and distributed throughout the neighborhood.

Design political posters using headlines and pictures from newspaper and magazine articles.

For instance, one poster could be constructed displaying favorable headlines and photos of a particular candidate. Another poster could be constructed displaying unfavorable headlines and photos of that same candidate. This concept could be applied to other candidates as well as to each key issue. These posters might be used during a classroom debate, entered into a contest, displayed at a get-out-the-vote parade, posted on an informational school bulletin board, or displayed on local shop windows. If entered into a contest, the winners might have their designs posted throughout the community or receive gift certificates from local businesses.

Organizing Voter-Turnout Campaigns

Organize a parade, complete with marching bands.

Invite spectators along the parade route to join the march for voter registration (which might end at a bank of registration booths). The parade could be led by a public official with a loudspeaker (perhaps the superintendent, the mayor, or even your Congressperson). One school could be designated for the beginning of the parade and a different school, community center, church or library as the end. The designated end should be equipped with personnel, tables, pens, papers, and registration forms needed to register new voters. A school bus could be designated to accompany the parade participants in order to transport spectators who are unable to join in the march to the registration area. (You'll want to check with local officials to find out if you need a permit to hold such an event).

Organize a neighborhood walk to tun out the vote.

A small group of students, led by an adult advisor, could ring door bells and enlist their neighbors to register and go to the polls. A signed "contract" is most likely to produce results! A variation on the walk is a Halloween trick-or-treat turnabout. Students dressed in patriotic costumes request not candy, but a promise to vote. Publish a school or community newsletter. Recruit student reporters, interviewers, photographers, and editors to create a newsletter that focuses on current election issues, candidates, and propositions which may directly affect the community. Students could interview neighborhood business owners and residents regarding the issues. Opinions published may be anonymous if desired. Students might also integrate information about the mock election into the newsletter, inviting the parents and community members to mock election activities to help them become better informed about the candidates and issues.

Prepare a brochure or handbook with basic information about voter registration for distribution to the community.

Contact your local League of Women Voters and your County Clerk or other local election officials to be sure your information is accurate and up to date!

Coordinate a telephone chain to register voters or get voters to the polls.

Students might telephone the parents of five schoolmates to provide them with voter registration requirements or voting information. Important information to convey includes: the date, location, and hours of the closest registration site; the requirements for registration; and information about how to get to and from the polls (public transportation, school bus shuttles, car pools, teen volunteer). Prior to Election Day students must also know where and when registered voters can vote, and what the documents voters need to take with them to vote. In order to continue the chain, the student must be prepared to provide each contact with the name and telephone number of three additional telephone contacts. Students then ask each of their five contacts to telephone three additional contacts to help get the word out.

Provide transportation to voter registration sites or to the polls.

Voter registration tables might be set up outside designated voter registration sites (churches, supermarkets, community centers, libraries, City Hall). Buses might trans-

port students and registrants or take voters to the polls. One teacher rented a school bus to take her school's eligible voters to the polls to cast their first vote! The students carried an American flag into each polling place to celebrate their first votes and gave each other high-five's when they came out as voters. Seventeen Magazine ran their photo.

Use the media.

School newsletters, and other formats to inform those registering or voting of the hours the bus is available, where it can be boarded, its destination, and the approximate time they will return to the boarding site. Tables and chairs could be set up outside the bus while people wait to register. Students might offer to baby-sit the children of those who are registering or voting, stay with the ill or elderly while a caretaker goes out to vote, or exchange a chore (e.g., mowing the lawn) for time spent going to the polls. Try brainstorming how student time can be exchanged for time to register and vote.

Other format suggestions:

One group in Tennessee' organized a "Neighborhood Reunion" of local success stories. Doctors, lawyers, business people, and other professionals who once lived in a low-income neighborhood "came home" to meet the children now struggling to grow up there. The event inspired voter turn-out campaigns to support the candidates who would help find funds for neighborhood improvement. The students' efforts resulted in the reopening of the local library and neighborhood pool.

In Mississippi, former Secretary of State, Dick Molls, gave mock election participants a blank registration form and challenged them to each register one voter for future elections. Other schools have organized districted competitions to see which school could register the most voters.

Schedule a classroom visit with a local election official who can give you other ideas and suggestions for events and guidance in planning, registration, and voting requirements.

As students compile a list of event possibilities, suggest that they research their ideas (using the library, election officials, community contact and/or business leaders) to make an educated decision and a well thought-out plan for the event.

If need be, clear your project, plans and/or registration sites with your school district and with relevant facilities or organizations. (Do you need a special permit to locate voter registration booths on city sidewalks? Do local ordinances regulate distribution of flyers on street corners?)

Delegate responsibilities.

Once the event or activity has been selected, assign teams of students to various tasks and responsibilities. For example, students can research voter statistics and

Organizing Voter-Turnout Campaigns

registration laws (which differ from state to state). They may also volunteer to develop collateral materials or flyers. You may want to consider assigning each student team a different task, such as: manning voter registration booths. Team members could organize a schedule and recruit volunteers. If possible, they could also coordinate student transportation to and from their locations. Note: "Getting Out the Vote, A Guide for Running Registration and Voting Drives" by the League of Women Voters Education Fund points out that "in jurisdictions that do not permit volunteer deputy registrars, local election officials are truly key, because you will need paid registrars to do the actual registering."

Researching candidates/campaign issues. Consider assigning one team to each of the local, state, or federal candidates to research his or her positions on high-profile election issues (such as health care, taxes, immigration) as well as their proposals to solve these issues. (In addition to library resources and the League of Women Voters, students can research the candidates and issues on the National Student Parent Mock Election's Internet page located at <http://AllPolitics.com>.)

Organizing refreshments. Several students might coordinate volunteers (home economics teachers and/or students, parents) to provide refreshments, make refreshments themselves, or ask local restaurants or grocery stores to provide refreshments.

Drafting canvassing scripts for a door-to-door voter registration campaign. Team members might use preproduced scripts or research similar scripts, consult the League of Women Voters or local elections officials, and draft their own.

Have students make regular class presentations about their findings, efforts, and/or progress.

Involve parents and the community

At a minimum, involve parents in discussions with students at home. Note that the University of Colorado's formal evaluation of the 1992 National Student/Parent Mock Election found that participating students showed increases in the discussion of political and election topics with parents. In addition to discussions of candidates and issues, help students to discuss the importance of voting with their parents, and perhaps persuade parents who are "too busy" of the difference that their one vote can make. Try role-playing such discussions in class, then discussing the results of students' efforts once they have tried their powers of persuasion on their family.

Consult your list of needs and, if possible, ask parents as well as students to help fulfill them. Community members, local organizations, and businesses can often provide resources and guidance. Suggest that students draft letters to community members (perhaps each student is assigned one business, organization, or election offi-

cial) asking for their help in organizing the event, getting the word out, or providing resources.

Some suggestions follow:

Local election officials may provide a facility or guidance in planning your event as well as impartial information.

Owners or managers of local businesses might donate resources or services to print event flyers (or simply display the flyers); man registration booths; allow use of their parking lots for voter registration; provide prizes for contests, posters, parade costumes, free advertising; or help with building parade floats.

Members of local organizations, such as 4-H groups, the PTA, and fraternal orders can help judge poster contests and provide refreshments.

Local candidates can speak at the end of parade routes, at centrally located registration events.

Members of the League of Women Voters may be able to offer event planning guidance and advice as a result of their own get-out-the-vote drives.

Parents may volunteer during the event or event preparation to shuttle students to and from registration booths, provide refreshments, participate in a neighborhood canvassing campaign, or man voter registration booths.

Reach out to everyone, even those who may have only nominal interest in the project.

If people are not interested at first, provide them with incentives. For example, local parades are a means for election officials or public candidates to campaign, and for local businesses to get free advertising by sponsoring or donating resources to the mock election.

Be sure the volunteers understand their responsibilities as well as the purposes of the mock election. If you are registering voters, double-check registration deadlines and requirements for registering so that your new voters are eligible for the upcoming elections.

Organizing Voter-Turnout Campaigns

Publicize your event

The more places you publicize your event, the more people will become involved and the greater your chances will be for hosting a fun and successful event. Word of mouth can be your greatest advocate in getting the word out. Encourage your students and their parents to mention the event to their friends, families, and acquaintances at civic meetings, informal gatherings or impromptu meetings.

Also try:

1. Circulating announcements to local TV/radio stations and newspapers.
2. Having students distribute flyers they have designed.
3. Placing student-drafted announcements about your event in local publications, member mailings of local organizations, community bulletin boards, and on TV and radio stations.
4. Running student-created PSAs in local media.
5. Organizing a student telephone chain or letter-writing campaign.

Wherever your creativity may lead you, emphasize the nonpartisan and educational values of the mock election.

Follow up

As always, acknowledge the efforts of those who helped or participated in your event with thank-you letters.

Evaluate your results with students. Did you reach your goals for registering new voters or getting voters to the polls (particularly if you targeted a specific group)? What was most effective/least effective about your efforts? How could you improve your event next time?

Checklist for Registration Supplies

1. Identifying sign or poster
2. Name tags for registrars
3. Pens, pencils
4. Forms for recording names and addresses of registrants
5. Information of early voting
6. Polling place list
7. List of other registration sites and schedules
8. Street directory
9. Directions to the elections office
10. Change for telephone (to call elections office with queries)
11. Stamps (if necessary to mail forms)
12. Phone numbers of registration offices in adjacent jurisdictions
13. Official Forms
14. Registration form
15. Change-of-address form
16. Registration forms for neighboring jurisdictions (if permissible)
17. Applications for absentee ballots

Make sure registrars are familiar with all the necessary forms. If the jurisdiction is covered under the language requirements of the Voting Rights Act, registration applications, signs, and all other materials must be printed in both English and the specified minority language, which in Texas is Spanish.

Checklist reprinted from "Getting Out the Vote-A Guide for Running Registration and Voting Drives," 1984 League of Women Voters Education Fund.